ASSOCIATION OF THE LAITY

OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

EVIDENCE AND OPINIONS

ON THE

HOUSE OF LAYMEN

IN ALLIANCE WITH

THE SYNOD OF TORONTO

SUBMITTED

TO THE LAITY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

COMPILED BY

THE HONORARY SECRETARY.

(John Symons)

TORONTO:
THE WILLIAMSON BOOK CO.
5 KING ST. WEST,
1893.

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PREFACE.

WE have to express our gratification at the interest felt by the Laity generally in the first presentation to their notice of the suggestion to establish a House of Laymen, in alliance with the Synod of Toronto—an interest which has increased in proportion to the knowledge of the subject treated on, and which we are sure will be accelerated by a perusal of the following evidence and opinions so readily and handsomely given to us by all classes of the Laity. In the change proposed there are no doubt some difficulties to encounter, but the advantages which the following synopsis of letters shows, are of such extraordinary importance and value to the best interests of the Church, that they will surely be overcome; and we have good hope that all orders in the church will accord to the movement their earnest and active support.

The one great object of the Institution is to enable Lay Representatives to acquire such knowledge, not only of the subjects which ordinarily engage the attention of the Synod, but also all such as may be referred to them by the Bishop, the President of the Synod, or originated by themselves; so that they may better and more intelligently, than at present is possible, discharge their duties to their constituents, to the Synod and to the Church.

The proposed House of Laymen is, we submit, well adapted to this end. The Lay Representatives having knowledge months before hand, of at least some of the subjects to be discussed, are likely by previous reading and enquiry to fit themselves for the crucial test of debate, when by comparing the opinions of one with those of another, by rubbing them together as it were, by seeing which is the harder and best stands the friction of practical utility, truth by such means is separated from the numerous sophisms that surround it, and will be afterwards employed in carrying out the well thought of conclusions to the general advantage of our beloved Church.

20th May, 1893.

PROPOSAL

To Establish a House of Laymen in Alliance with the Synod of Toronto.

1. The institution now suggested is of recent origin. The first one was inaugurated by the present Archbishop of Canterbury on July 8, 1885, by virtue of resolutions agreed to by both Houses of Convocation of the Province of Canterbury. His Grace, in the course of his address on opening the first House of Laymen, said: "This House is therefore a body purely representative of the laity, and its realization at this day with simpler, freer, larger aims than those of faction or political party, is full of strong and happy promise. The moral effects of its discussions must, from the first, be great, and we cannot doubt that if its conclusions are arrived at by patient debate in fully attended meetings, the moral effect will, in due time, take material and practical form." And at the present day, after seven years' experience of the working of the organization, it is understood, and, as indeed its annual reports of proceedings show, that his Grace's hopes have been fully realized.

2. It has met with such high approval by the various parties in the church that the Province of York has recently followed the lead of the province of Canterbury, and now England and Wales are represented on church matters by two representative Lay Houses.

3. The House of Laymen is not, in any way, a legislative or political body, with any definite powers, but is simply a consultative or deliberative body of laymen, meeting when the Synod meets, but sitting and acting apart from it. The House will meet on one or two evenings during the time the Synod is in session, so as not to interfere with their duties as members of the Synod. (See resolutions 2 and 5, page 8.)

4. The resolutions 7 and 8 will show the class of subjects the House will deal with. First the motion, notices and business before the Synod will be considered, and then, if there is time, general objects and matters of actual or proposed legislation, and subjects both ecclesiastical and civil affecting the interests of the church; and they may also discuss matters of philanthropy, such as the best mode of increasing largely the Superannuation Fund, the better housing of the working classes, the investigation and relief of poverty, and such like.

5. The House of Laymen in London and country districts claim their discussions and reports are read with interest, and that the clergy and church generally attach some weight to their resolutions, and their expressions of opinion, and we doubt not that having regard to the numbers and intelligence of our laity, the same results will attend their deliberations when authorized to meet in their own House. And we submit that the present is a most favorable time to inaugurate our House of Laymen, in alliance with the Synod of Toronto.

6. It may be objected that the lay members of the present Synod are quite satisfied with the position they occupy. Many of them, no doubt, are, but there are some who are not, yet all without a dissentient voice, putting on one side the diverse opinions, will venerate the memory of the good Bishop Strachan who gave them that position. Before his time, both here and in England, they were almost entirely ignored as co-operators with the clergy.

7. We would just observe in passing, that we feel it necessary to refer frequently to English church precedents. We acknowledge with thankfulness the many blessings and benefits we derive from our beloved mother church, yet we are not insensible of the fact that we inherit some of her faults and disadvantages, which our own church has long labored under, and which we are now trying to remedy.

8. We say the laity were almost entirely ignored, and the clergy in England were supremely indifferent as to the waning prosperity of the church, and what was the result? One of the able authors of the Bampton lectures says: "under the exclusive *régime* of an endowed clergy, more than one-half of the religious people of England were alienated from the church. Other denominations rapidly rose on our decline, and it is only within the present generation that the ground then lost has been, to some extent at least, regained by the exertions of a more devout and intelligent clergy, and we owe to them whatever advance the church has made during recent years."

9. Looking to the results of our late census, so disappointing to Churchmen,* it is evident that there is still some ground left which we ought to recover. Numerically our church is far below the position her prestige and great advantages warrant her in holding, and which she is only prevented holding by, we are sorry to say it, the supercilious apathy of a large portion of her laity, from whatever cause it m ayhave arisen

10. Bishop Strachan's invitation to them to sit in Synod with the clergy was a well-chosen effort to arouse them from that lethargy. It was, indeed, a great advance towards placing them in their true position. It has, for forty years at any rate, offered them a good

*The church population in the Diocese of Huron has decreased 6.60 per cent. In the Diocese of Niagara 3.81 per cent. These and the loss in other dioceses, are not at all agreeable reading.

school for acquiring an insight of the financial condition and management of the various departments of church work. But here we must stop. There are questions at the present day, beyond this gratefully acknowledged privilege, of vastly greater importance to the laity and the church generally, on which they desire and ought to have better facilities than they now possess, for acquiring such information as will enable them in Synod to deal with them in an intelligent and an effective manner.

12. Representatives to the Synod, especially those from the country, with few exceptions, know nothing of the merits or demerits of any question until it is placed before them at the end of a session, when they are absurdly expected to give an almost instant decision upon it. It is then introduced and supported by a few hurried remarks, anything like debate which would bring out facts necessary to be known is not practicable, and it is then summarily disposed of by postponement, withdrawal, or reference to the Executive Committee, and little more is heard of it. This has unfortunately been the experience of many of the laity on questions before the Synod of late years.*

12. As to the composition of the Synod. We think if enquiry were made, it would be found that the speaking power of the clergy is as two to one, and the voting is in about the same proportion. It is sometimes put forward as a very liberal concession, that each parish sends three representatives to the Synod and only one clergyman. As a beginning of a brighter era for laymen, it was perhaps, in Bishop Strachan's time a wise provision. For then the laity had to be educated to fill satisfactorily their new position, and so they might sit and listen to the remarks of the clergy, but were not to vote. Now that they are allowed the privilege, it should be stated that three representatives in voting only count as one, which provision therefore is now only liberal in appearance, as in fact the clergy, some of their parishes sending two and three, far outnumber the laity in voting. This fact may perhaps account to some extent at least, for the ill-success of motions brought before the Synod of late years by laymen. The point however we do not lay much stress upon, inasmuch as there is no record, as far as we know, of the speeches made during any session, so as to form a correct opinion. Our estimate is based on the motions made in the Synod, 1890.

13. It may be further objected that in Canada we have Synods where the laity sit with the clergy, whilst in England there are no Synods. This last assertion may not be quite correct,† but assuming that it is, it should be stated that in England all or most of the Dio-

*We refer to motions made by Dr. Hodgins, Rev. E. Baldwin, in the interest of the laity, Mr. Symons, Mr. Mothersill, Mr. Cumberland.

†Salisbury, we are informed, has a Diocesan Synod.

ceses have conferences where the laity sit and vote with the clergy as our Synods do, and it is from these conferences that members are chosen and sent to the House of Laymen in London, whilst in Canada we have no conferences,* and therefore it is proposed to choose our members at the Easter vestries.

14. And we think we are correct in stating, as an instance of the value of debate, however constituted, that it was owing to the debates, resolutions and suggestions of the House of Laymen,† that the Archbishop of Canterbury was prevailed on earnestly to support the Bills for the Reform of Church Patronage and the Promotion of Church Discipline, and which latter Bill became an Act of Parliament during the late session.

At the proper time the following, or some such *resolutions*, may be agreed on :

HOUSE OF LAYMEN FOR THE DIOCESE OF TORONTO.

1. That it is desirable that a House of Laymen, being communicants of the Church of England, be formed for the Diocese of Toronto, to confer with the Bishop and Clergy of such Diocese.

2. That the members of the House of Laymen be appointed by the lay members of the various parishes in the Diocese, and who shall be the same members as are appointed representatives to the Synod, and that they continue to hold their seats until the then next Easter vestries.

3. That additional members, not exceeding ten, be appointed by his Lordship the president, if he see fit.

4. That the House of Laymen be in all case convened by his Lordship the president, simultaneously with the convening of members of the Synod.

5. That the said House be convened to sit only during the first two evenings the Synod is in Session, or on the evening before and the first evening the Synod is in Session, and be opened by his Lordship the president.

6. That the said House, or any committee of the House, may be requested by his Lordship the president to meet in conference the clergy, or any committee of the clergy, upon such occasions and at such place as his Lordship the president may think fit.

7. That the subjects on which the House of Laymen may be con-

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*Whilst this pamphlet is going through the press, we learn that it is proposed to hold a Church Conference in Toronto shortly. It will be, we believe, the first of the kind ever holden in Canada. It is a move in the right direction and we wish it every success.

†See their proceedings of Session 1891, page 11.

sulted, shall be all subjects which ordinarily occupy the attention of Synod, saving only the definition or interpretation of the faith and doctrine of the church.

8. That his Lordship the president, in opening the House of Laymen, or at any other time in their session, may lay before them any subject (with the limitation provided in resolution 7) on which he desires their counsel, and that the results of all the deliberations of the said House on any subjects, whether thus referred to them, or originated by themselves, be communicated to the president.

9. That if the above resolutions be adopted by the Synod, a joint committe of the clergy be appointed to confer with any committee that may hereafter be appointed by the House of Laymen, in order to frame such rules and orders as may be found necessary.

10. Provided that nothing in the scheme shall be held to prejudice the duties, rights and privileges of the Toronto Synod according to the laws and usages of the Church of England in the Dominion of Canada.

We will suppose the Synod agrees to some such resolutions as the foregoing, and that under resolution 9, committees of clergymen and laity are appointed, when the following or other rules may be adopted.

RULES FOR PROCEEDINGS:

1. The proceedings of the House shall begin with prayers selected from the Book of Common Prayer.

2. In the absence of the chairman and vice chairman, a chairman shall be elected by the members present, and fifteen shall be a quorum of the House.

3. After prayers the minutes of the last meeting shall be read, confirmed and signed.

4. The procedure of the House of Commons, as regards the organization and conduct of debate shall, as far as possible, be adopted by the House of Laymen, except where otherwise ordered by these rules; but, this rule shall not be held to preclude the chairman from the right of taking part in the debate.

5. The chairman shall determine all points of order, the manner of putting questions, and order in which members shall speak.

6. Notice of business intended to be brought before the House on any day, must be given before 4 15 p.m. of the preceding day, to the honorary secretary.

7. Votes shall be taken by show of hands, unless six members shall demand a formal division, which shall be taken at once and in such manner as the chairman shall appoint.

8. No business not entered on the agenda paper for the day shall be entered, unless voted urgent by the House.

9. The chairman shall decide the order in which business shall be entered upon the agenda paper.

10. Each member shall contribute one dollar towards the annual expenses, and a treasurer shall be appointed.

15. The advantages of the proposal just explained, while they are obvious to every reflective mind, are of such extraordinary importance at the present juncture of the church's position, that some further allusion to them seems absolutely requisite. Many great and important church questions are passing and others will very soon pass before us, and it is fitting and proper that the laity should be able with facility and perfect freedom to consider them, and that the church authorities and all interested in the verities of religion and the best means of inculcating them, should know what the solid opinion of the laity is upon all such questions. We regret to point to the fact which we deem indisputable, that no one in the Synod or out of it, with measurable accuracy, knows what the opinion of the laity is, on any given church question. This ignorance is destined to disappear. The dark ages are passed, and the prospect begins to brighten. We look forward with hope, and now firmly believe, when permission is authoritatively given, that at the Easter vestries the best and most capable men will be chosen in the double capacity, as representatives to the Synod and as members to their own House. They will then be, as the Archbishop of Canterbury said, "A body purely representative of the laity, and its realization at this day, with simpler, freer, larger aims than those of faction or political party, is full of strong and happy promise. The moral effect of its discussions must from the first be great, and we cannot doubt that if its conclusions are arrived at by patient debate in fully attended meetings, the moral effect will in due time take material and practical form."

16. In the new organization we are happy to know (1) That there will be nothing which will wear an antagonistic aspect. In debate there is, and always will be differences of opinion, but when various minds are brought into contact, such differences are likely to be lessened, if not entirely removed, and particularly when all have but one distinctive object in view, the promotion of our holy religion and the best means of inculcating it. (2) In this, their first aim will be, to assist and co-operate with the clergy, in all that appertains to church work, spiritual and temporal, leading to closer relations, warmer sympathy, and increased mutual respect. (3) There will be no destroying the just rights and privileges of one order in church government for the benefit of another, but rather the greater and more equal diffusion of all those blessings and happy surroundings of all orders in the church now enjoyed, and which should tend to her advancement and prosperity.

(4) Every Churchman, clerical and lay, would be materially benefitted and instructed by the stimulus which free discussion on church work, from a layman's point of view, would be certain to engender and encourage. (5) The discussions on motions, rules, resolutions and reports and final expressions of opinion thereon by intelligent laymen in a well-ordered debate, must have some weight with all Churchmen throughout the diocese and beyond. (6) And we hope we are not presumptuous in saying, that we think they would be especially valuable to the clergy and all our church governors, and we gladly include, in anticipation, the proposed inauguration of the much needed "General Synod," when, and if it is desired to know on any occasion the correct opinion of the laity on any question of church interest. (7) Admirably as were the arrangements of Bishop Strachan, suited to the more immediate exigencies of the laity of his day, and successful, as we gladly admit they have been, in many respects ever since, there is still a yearning, an absolute necessity, for the adoption of some more comprehensive and perfect system of lay-representation, a system which will go far to remove apathy and ignorance amongst so many of our Churchmen. A system in short which will carry out the earnestly expressed words and wishes of the liberal-minded bishop referred to. A system, an educational institution ; the "House of Laymen," which shall "teach our people energy, self-reliance and enterprise in the cause of religion."

17. The foregoing Proposal to establish a House of Laymen, in Toronto, we now commend to the favorable consideration of every Churchman. It is we know a departure from an old synodical institution originated by Bishop Strachan, but which has now outgrown its usefulness. It no longer acts up to or satisfies the spirit and intention of the good Bishop. We say advisedly that Laymen who now attend our Synods learn there little beyond the mysteries of ecclesiastical finance. They have no power or influence, on any matter brought before them that concerns the externals of religion on which they are or ought to be deeply interested, and which power the Bishop of Manchester said they ought to have. The Archbishop of Canterbury has set the church a good example. He has pointed out a remedy for this injustice and moreover has proved its success—a way by which the Laity may have simpler and freer opportunities for discussion on all such matters, which, said His Grace, "by patient debate could not fail to have a great moral effect." Let the Laity now do their duty to their church. Let them make the cause we advocate their own, banish from their ranks all apathy and indifference, talk over and promulgate their views among their brethren, and assert themselves by their numbers and intelligence fit and worthy to possess the great boon of their own House of Laymen, in alliance with the Synod of Toronto.

Toronto, 14th Nov. 1892.

HOUSE OF LAYMEN.

J. SYMONS, ESQ.,

68 Avenue Road, Toronto, Canada.

Dear Sir,—Your Letter of the 6th of July reached me some time ago, but the General Election and pressure of engagements generally prevented my attending to it until now. The enclosed paper showing the origin and constitution of our House of Laymen at its commencement in 1886, will, I think, best answer some of your questions. I may further explain that we are not in any way a legislative or political body with any definite powers, but are rather looked upon as a consultative or deliberative body of Laymen, meeting when the Houses of Convocation meet, but sitting and acting apart from them.

You will observe that members of the House of Laymen are to be appointed by the lay members of the Diocesan Conferences (see Resolution 2). I should perhaps explain, that the members of the Diocesan Conferences are themselves appointed by Ruri-Deconal Conference throughout each Diocese, and such R. D. Conferences are elected by the church members of each parish in vestry in every Rural Deanery so that indirectly the members of the House of Laymen represent every parish in the Diocese. I may add that the Province of York has recently followed the lead of the Province of Canterbury, and now England and Wales are represented in Church matters by two representative Lay Houses.

As to our "General Objects," you will gather these partly from Resolutions 7 and 8, and from the paper (of proceedings) of 1886, enclosed, which shows you to some extent the class of subjects with which we deal. Since that time we have been chiefly occupied with matters of actual or projected legislation in matters affecting the church, and in matters of philanthropy such as "Thrift," "Houses of the Poor," and such like. And I think it may fairly be claimed for the House of Laymen, that its discussions and reports are read with interest, and that the clergy and church people generally attach some weight to our resolutions and our expressions of opinion. But I am bound to confess that with a church established like ours, and carrying on its legislation through Parliament, I do not think that our doings can be expected to have much practical importance. I shall be glad if this letter gives you the information you seek.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) CHARLES J. BLAGG.

Greenhill, Cheadle, Staffordshire,
July 29th, 1892.

PROVINCE OF CANTERBURY, HOUSE OF LAYMEN,
CHURCH HOUSE, DEAN'S YARD,
WESTMINSTER, S. W., 1st Sept., 1892.

J. SYMONS, ESQ.,
Toronto.

Dear Sir,—Your inquiries as to the constitution, etc., of this House I have great pleasure in answering.

The House of Laymen was instituted by Resolutions agreed to by both Houses of Convocation of the Province, on July 8th, 1885, to confer with the members of Convocation. One of the resolutions reads as follows: "That the subjects on which the House of Laymen may be consulted, shall be all subjects which ordinarily occupy the attention of Convocation saving only the definition or interpretation of the faith and doctrine of the church."

The House is composed of rather more than 100 members selected by the Lay Members of the Diocesan Conference, the Diocese of London returning ten members, Winchester, Rochester, Lichfield and Worcester, six each.

The House meets only when Convocation is in session when any subjects referred by His Grace, the Archbishop, or originated by members of the House, are discussed and communicated to the Archbishop.

In the words of the present Archbishop of Canterbury in opening the first House of Laymen:

"This House is therefore a body purely representative of the Laity, and its realization at this day with simpler, freer, larger aims than those of faction or political party is full of strong and happy promise. The moral effect of its discussions must from the first be great, and we cannot doubt that if its conclusions are arrived at by patient debate in fully attended meetings, the moral effect will, in due time, take material and practical form."

And I think His Grace's hopes have to a large degree been realized.

I send you by separate post a summary of the proceedings of one of the sessions which will give an idea of the method of procedure, and the names of the members, rules for procedure, etc. And if I can answer any further questions which you may wish to be informed on, I shall be only too pleased.

I may add that a House of Laymen has also this year been instituted for the Province of York, in this kingdom, on the lines of this House.

I am, dear sir,
Yours very faithfully,
(Signed) J. LARCOMBE,
Secretary.

NOTICE OF MOTION BY WALTER A. GEDDES, ESQ.,* FOR THE SYNOD ON JUNE 13TH, 1893.

That it is desirable to afford the Lay Representatives to the Synod the privilege of meeting in conference during its session under the name, style and title of "The House of Laymen in alliance with the Synod of Toronto."

That the resolutions and rules governing the said House of Laymen shall be in the main the same as those approved of by the Archbishop of Canterbury for the London House of Laymen.

That his Lordship the President of the Synod in opening the House of Laymen, or at any other time in their session, may lay before them any subject on which he may desire their counsel, and that the results of all their deliberations on any subjects whether thus referred to them or originated by themselves be communicated to the President by the chairman of such House.

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*Col. Boulton, of Cobourg, it was expected would have introduced this motion to the Synod, but he writes expressing his sincere regret that he cannot fill his place at the Synod on 13th June, as he is under orders to take his regiment on that day into the annual camp of military drill at Kingston. Mr. Geddes has, therefore, kindly consented to supply his place.

COMMENTS ON THE "PROPOSAL,"

WITH

REMARKS IN A FEW CASES.

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1. "There is much in the preamble or statement of the case with which I concur, e. g. paragraphs 9, 10 and 11. I have noticed that the reporters ignore all but the stock speakers, generally the clergy. When a country delegate gets up to speak the reporters carefully place their pens behind their ears, and lean back in their seats for a "recess," and that they are to some extent supported in this by the indifference of the gentlemen on the raised platform. The lay delegates, it is true, have neither time nor opportunity to study the questions brought before the Synod. In this connection I may say in answer to the question occasionally raised in Synod, "Why are the country parishes so poorly represented? The delegates feel that they are merely wanted as voting machines, that their opinions are rather resented as presumptuous than listened to as contributions to the vote."

If any thing were wanting to show the little interest taken by laymen in important matters before the Synod, we refer to the fact that of 64 country representatives present in the Synod of 1890, only three took part in its five days' proceedings.

"In England there is a *raison d' etrè* for the House of Laymen that we have not here, (Houses of Convocation). Previous to the Institution of that body, the Laity was not represented at all in the National Church Courts, and even now they do not rank as the Lower House of Convocation or take part in the work of the Church as that body does. They help to mould opinion or rather they strengthen or rectify (modify) the opinions of the two clerical bodies by the expression of opinion of a picked body of the Laity, but they cannot do more than that."

We are quite aware of all this. There a vast difference between the Clerical Courts of England and Canada, but the prin-

ciple of admitting the laity into the confidence of the ruling powers is, or should be, the same in both countries. True we have no convocations, but this will likely be remedied in September next by the organization of a General Synod which will do the work of convocations. Our House of Laymen would be useful now, it will then be an essential. The General Synod will effect no great and durable changes unless they have the well ascertained opinion of the laity. Just as the Archbishop of Canterbury failed year after year to get passed his Church Discipline Bill, until he established his House of Laymen and had the clear opinion and support of that body. We have no two Houses of Convocation, which is alleged as the reason for the establishment of the House of Laymen in London, there being no Synods there such as we have here. But they have and had long before the establishment of such House what was far better, as stated in the pamphlet Diocesan Conferences. To these conferences the laity are elected at the Easter vestries. Church questions are discussed and freely and fully debated and in a manner wholly at variance with the hurried slipshod discussions witnessed in our Synods, and so instructed and equipped are the members in the art of debate that there is great rivalry as to who shall be selected to adorn the House of Layman in London. And so would it be with laymen here when they know that a way is open to them, that they have the boon of their own House of Laymen conferred upon them, where they can stand upright as intelligent men, where they will be under no restraint or surveillance as regards the freedom of speech where they can converse freely, compare the opinions of one with those of another, and see which is the harder and best stands the friction of practical utility. Depend upon it when such a state of things is brought about there will be emulation among churchmen, and the very best men in every parish will be proud to represent it in their own House when the Synod meets. The status of an elected layman will be greatly raised and honorable in the estimation of the whole Church.

"The time for debate, two evenings of the session, is too short. It should be at least a week before the Synod meets."

This would be quite in order and desirable if we were organizing an institution *de novo*. But we have to deal with things as they are, with customs venerable for their age, and it would hardly do to be too exacting or too sweeping in the change proposed.

"I would suggest that it would be better to choose one of your own body as President than ask the Bishop to act as President."

One word of explanation. The House of Laymen is not an independent organization. It is in fact part and parcel of the Synod and is presided over by *its own elected chairman*. The Bishop merely opens it and then retires. He takes no part in its deliberations and is simply President of the whole Synod. Just as the Archbishop of Canterbury opens the two Houses of Convocation and then the House of Laymen and retires.

Though laymen may with the greatest freedom meet and deliberate, yet may take no part in the actual legislation, their influence is felt on various occasions. Take for example a recent case in the London House of Laymen. The Archbishop in 1885-6 introduced into the House of Lords two bills relating to Patronage and Discipline. They were opposed and nothing was heard of them for several sessions. The House of Laymen considered their objects most important in the interest of the Church. They were reforms much needed, and in 1891 passed unanimously the following resolution:—"That this House while regretting the failure of the efforts which were made in the Parliament of 1885-86 and the early sessions of the present Parliament to effect legislation on the subjects of Church Patronage and Clergy Discipline, respectfully presses upon His Grace the Archbishop the importance of these subjects not being allowed to drop, and hopes that Bills dealing with them will be introduced into Parliament during the present session." In consequence of this resolution His Grace reintroduced the Bills and had the satisfaction of passing the Bill on Clergy Discipline during last year and has promised that he will direct his earnest attention to get the Bill on Church Patronage passed during the present year.

If we had a House of Laymen in Toronto might not a similar resolution be appropriately and usefully passed in relation to

Mr. Cumberland's motion on Church Patronage—"That this House while regretting the failure of the efforts made during the last seven years to effect a reform in the mode of making appointments to Rectories, respectfully presses upon His Lordship the Bishop, the importance of not allowing the subject to drop, and hopes that the Executive Committee will be able to report their final decision in time for the present Synod.'

2. "Your's of the 4th to hand, pamphlet received on Friday. The 'Proposal' meets with my unqualified approval, and it is my opinion that country delegates as a whole will also approve of it, when they come to realize the fact that a House of Laymen will afford an opportunity for full discussion among laymen, impossible in the Synod, where motions introduced by laymen, if they seem in any way to encroach on the irresponsible position of the clergy, are not allowed to be even discussed, in a word the mover is ostracised. Now if such motions were discussed by laymen before they were submitted to Synod, much of the odium now attached by the clergy to the movers of such motions would disappear."

3. "I have carefully considered the proposal of a House of Lay men, submitted by you, sections 9, 10 and 11 set forth the prominent reasons for the movement. Why should not the lay delegates appoint a Committee to sit apart, as occasion may call for, under regulations, to discuss such matters as affect the proceedings of Synod or to originate subjects for Synodical action."

A very good suggestion, but it asserts the principle of an independent House of Laymen. Our desire is to be in alliance with the Synod if possible.

"Impromptu motions made by members in Synod on important matters ofttimes make little impression and reasonably so in so large an assemblage."

"I observe that the House of Laymen in England was formally instituted by resolutions agreed to by both Houses of Convocation, and that the House was composed of 100 members of the Conference selected from each Diocese of the Province."

"I take it that the movement contemplated in your proposal must originate in Synod to be of service."

"Should I again represent my parish in Synod to be elected next Easter, I would gladly enter upon a discussion of matters affecting the usefulness of Synod's welfare of the Church."

4. "I am favored with your circular of 27th ult., enclosing a

second copy of proposal and fully agree with the objects contemplated in the establishment of a House of Laymen for the Diocese of Toronto."

"That the opinion of the country laity would be favorable to the project I think there is little question."

"The position of the country missions particularly, and some of the parishes from whatever cause arising has become deplorable."

"Having regard to the financial condition of the Synod, improvement from extraneous sources must at best prove slow, and judging from the results of the last few years cannot in any degree be anticipated."

"To attain the desired end at least two conditions seem indispensable, viz., a radical change in the supervision and visitation of rural districts, in conjunction with the admission to holy orders of only such candidates, as, in addition to scholastic attainments, may afford reliable indications of the possession of a measure of energy which would conduce in a reasonable degree to success in a secular calling."

"There are, of course, other matters of great moment which should be legitimately considered by a House of Laymen, but may be well left to its collective wisdom rather than dealt with in the medium of correspondence."

5. "I am in receipt of your circular, etc. In reply I beg to suggest to yourself and your associates that it would be better to attend regularly the meetings of the Synod and insist there upon the rights of the laity being respected, than to separate ourselves into a cave of adullam or lay caucus. But if your scheme was carried out, I should most strongly object to the Bishop being the presiding officer, for obvious reasons."

The Bishop is not the presiding officer. The House of Laymen elect their own presiding officer under the name of Chairman. The Bishop is President only of the Synod. (See remark on page 6).

"Could not your object be equally well attained by a fuller and more regular attendance at Synod?"

These two requirements are fully attained at present. The laity are numerous enough, but when in Synod with a few rare exceptions, they have no will of their own, arising from the fact that they have had no opportunity such as the clergy have had, of informing themselves on the subjects discussed, and are obliged to vote just as the clergy wish them to vote. They have no freedom or choice whatever owing to the want of previous instruction.

"I do not understand an apparent contradiction in your proposal. In clause 7 of your constitution, on page 5, you except from the subjects which may occupy the attention of the House, 'the definition or interpretation of the faith and doctrine of the church,' and then on page 9, in section 17, you complain that the Laity 'have no power or influence on any matter brought before them that concerns the externals of religion.' If you mean that externals in Divine worship have nothing to do with the definition and interpretation of the faith and doctrine of the Church, I entirely disagree with you."

The writer labors under some misconception. He assumes that all externals are essentials. Bread and wine in the Holy Communion, and water in baptism are external emblems and essentials as ordained by our blessed Lord. But excessive bowings, lighted candles, incense, crosses in the church, processions with banners, man-millinery and innumerable other puerile devices are non-essentials. It may be asked why did the Jews in their worship use various emblems? because their priests had to deal with and instruct very ignorant people.

In the early ages of the world people mentally walked in gross darkness. We do not quite agree with Dryden's line

"Since wild in woods the noble savage ran."

Yet it is undoubted that the Jewish people long remained in a condition of ignorance and abject slavery. Their mental faculties and ideas were not fitted for such instruction as could be given them when they had become more enlightened and educated. It was therefore necessary that many things had to be conveyed to their minds in such a manner as was suited to their capacities at that time, and in language best suited to their understandings. And thus ornaments, decorations, customs and ceremonies contained symbolical and emblematical significations which the priest no doubt fully explained to them.* But we claim, and it is a just claim, to live in more enlightened times. The New Testament teaches us to worship God in spirit and in truth—"to serve Him, not in bondage of the figure or shadow, but in the freedom of the Spirit." It is only the indifferent and the very ignorant of the present day who are satisfied in their worship to copy the puerile practices of the early Jewish nation.

* The Jews and their Customs, by Rev. E. M. Myers: New York, 1879.

Some of the ceremonies of the Church which had an emblematical meaning were at first very few and of godly intent, but we are told they had so increased up to the time of the Reformation—there was such an excess of them, and that they had led to so many abuses, that the burden of them was intolerable.* They were at that time—being non-essentials,—"cut away and clean rejected" for ever it was thought. Is it wise, in the interest of a pure and intelligent theology, to wink at their being brought back again,—undoing the work of our great reformers, and slowly but surely enticing us, nay where it can be done, compelling us to be familiar and approving of the ever-to-be deplored dark ages of the church, both Jewish and Christian? A reaction of barbarianism from a religion of civilization is not in the interest of our church.

If the clergy, more especially the younger clergy, decline, as they have done so far, to effectually consult their congregations as to the introduction of symbols and emblems which are nonessentials, it will then become the duty of the laity to remonstrate, and if no heed be taken, to appeal to the Bishop, or after September next, to the General Synod.

"But I am entirely at one with you in a desire to see our Synod reformed. It is about as slovenly and unbusiness-like a deliberative body as we could find. The reason being, that the laity leave matters too much to the clergy, and do not take the trouble to remind them, as the Archbishop of Canterbury did his clergy, that there is such a thing as an abuse of independence. I should like to hear the matter discussed in Synod, and will do my best to secure for it a good hearing."

6. "I beg to state that I cannot help feeling that the country delegates, as a rule, find it difficult enough to attend the ordinary meetings of Synod regularly and conscientiously; and it would be a very serious addition to their burdens (both mentally and physically) if they were required to meet on two extra evenings, or to come up a day sooner than usual."

"In principal the idea is most excellent, and the need for it very great, but I fail to see how it could be carried out with the materials at present at your disposal. Parishes in the back country have such difficulty as it is in securing men of sufficient time, education or means for lay delegates, that many of them avail themselves *of the privilege of obtaining proxies in the cities.*"

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* Prayer Book. Preface.

This is an important fact and shows in a clear light the hollowness of the representative system in the Synod as applied to country parishes. Here are between forty and fifty gentlemen, all most respectable, who sit as representatives of congregations of whom they know nothing. Here they sit year after year clothed with the honor and enjoying the privileges of being members of the Synod without knowing their constituents and never giving any account of their stewardship. Here they sit incurring no trouble, expense or inconvenience of any kind, in perfect independence. It is absurd to expect that these men, with a few exceptions, will promote any change which will deprive them of the peculiar privileges which this unique system of proxy representation confers. It is quite as bad as the system known in England half a century ago as the rotten borough system. Agents there, living in small towns like Old Gatton and Sarum, arranged for the election of members or for proxies to members who never saw their constituents, and the shameful practice at last aroused the people to such a pitch of excitement at the wrong they had so long endured that King William nearly lost his crown. The great Reform Bill saved it. And yet there were bishops in the House of Lords and clergy throughout the land who saw many advantages in the system, and persuaded themselves that it was the perfection of Parliamentary representation! Just as laymen holding proxies will contend that our Synod system is faultless.

7. "I beg to state that I think the establishment of a House of Laymen for the Diocese of Toronto would be a very good thing, as then should laymen have anything to bring to the notice of the Synod, it could be done in proper form, and any suggestion they have to make would receive better attention as coming from the whole body of laymen, than as at present from one individual. I am sorry to say that I am unable to give any definite opinion as to the feelings of the country laity on this subject, as it is very difficult to get the farmers to take any interest in church matters, and when it comes to paying a dollar a year towards keeping up the House, I feel certain many of them would object to doing so. There is such a vast difference between the city and town parishes. We are so scattered, and are so far apart, it is imposible to get any number together except on a FINE Sunday afternoon. We cannot then talk these matters over."

Country laymen having a House of their own in Toronto

would feel that the office of representative was one of some importance and responsibility. There would be emulation among them, and a much superior class, both in point of wealth and intelligence, would be elected, and the $1.00 fee would be no objection.

It might be provided that at the Easter vestries only two instead of three country representatives to the Synod should be elected, but then their attendance as a rule should be required. This would raise the status of a representative, and proxies would cease.

8. "As to the establishment of a House of Laymen for the Diocese of Toronto, the proposition has my cordial sympathy, and I believe that a like feeling is held by the country laity as a whole."

9. "As to establishing a House of Laymen in alliance with the Synod of Toronto, I am quite in accord with what is suggested, especially number 16 and 17, and feel satisfied my brother laymen who have attended Synod are equally so."

"When attending Synod my feeling has always been that my time has been wasted. The vital matters of the Church omitted as appears to the mind of a layman."

10. "In reply would say, I have met quite a number of lay members, and they think it is a move in the right direction, and that it should have been introduced before. It is likely that I will be with you at next delegate meeting."

11. "In regard to the establishment of a House of Laymen for the Diocese of Toronto, on the lines indicated by you and your committee, I beg to say I consider it is a movement in the right direction, I cannot do other than give it my most favorable consideration, and by the blessing of God accompanying your feeble efforts I cannot doubt but that the issue shall be a general benefit to our beloved Church."

12. "Replying to your circular, etc., I may say that I would consider the establishment of a House of Laymen most desirable, and further, that from such experience as I have had of country parishes, I am confident that such a movement would have the effect of awakening much greater interest among the country representatives, and that they would feel in coming to the Synod sessions they would be able to take a more active part and accomplish more than at present is possible. It is very evident also that very little weight attaches to the remarks of individual lay members in the Synod as at present constituted, and the proposed House would certainly enable the lay opinion to be presented in a proper and weighty manner. I heartily concur in the proposed establishment on the lines suggested."

After speaking of his illness, etc.:

13. "With regard to the House of Laymen I cannot say much as I have not been able to talk to any one about it. I cannot see any great good it would be to the Church in this Diocese. I think the better way would be to call a meeting of the laymen some evening when the Synod is in session and talk the matter over and then take a note of what the laymen say. There are a few words in the pamplet, Sec. 9, page 6, after the words, 'we are sorry to say it,' which I think will not suit the laity too well. It will set them thinking."

The suggestion of an unauthorized meeting of the laity during the sitting of the Synod is not desirable under present circumstances.

14. "I think the establishment of a House of Laymen would be in the interest of the Church and in the cause of God. I am greatly in favor of this move and think it is in the right direction."

15. "Have read the circular on the proposal to establish a House of Laymen for the Diocese of Toronto with much pleasure."

"The proposal is a step in the right direction I think, and if wisely and judiciously organized and directed would give much more power and value to the opinions and views of the laity in the deliberations of the Synod. There is no opportunity for laymen to hear the views of their brother laymen on any question that may come up in the Synod, whereby unity of action might be secured and thus are ill prepared to vote intelligently on the question. I believe it would broaden our views on all questions connected with our Church, and lead to more active and aggressive work by laymen co-operating with our clergy for the building up of Christ's Kingdom here in Canada."

Apology for not writing sooner.

16. "The project meets with my heartiest sympathy. In my humble opinion one of the causes, if not the chief cause of the lack of progress of our Church in this Dominion is the fact that the laity have not received encouragement to take active interest and responsibility in *all* matters temporal and *spiritual* pertaining to the Church, and which, together with the general composition of our Synod, and the methods of procedure therein account in large measure for small attendance of lay representatives at its conventions."

17. "In reply to your circular enclosing, 'Proposal to establish a House of Laymen in alliance with the Synod of Toronto,' I beg to say that I cannot see my way to support it. I think it is in the best interests of the Church that there should to the most extent be joint action on the part of the clergy and laity. The Synod as constituted

carries out this idea, giving most ample rights and privileges to the laity, whose opinions and suggestions have so far as my experience goes, been accorded due weight both at the meetings of Synod and in the committees. And I fear that the proposed scheme might unfortunately lead to disunion and distrust."

If our church authorities will tread in the footsteps of the Archbishop of Canterbury there can be no "disunion or distrust." Of a number of letters received, this is the only one which gives the scheme a negative. We quite agree that it is desirable that there should be joint action on the part of the Clergy and Laity, that is if both classes have fair information on any question before them. But what are the facts. The clergy have every opportunity to study the questions brought before them. They are in constant communication with each other, and they have, in most cases, good libraries at their command. The laity, with a few rare exceptions, have no such opportunity or advantages. Not one in ten probably of even city and town representatives have adequate knowledge of the questions they vote on. And of the country representatives, one fact already referred to alone will suffice. Out of 65 present in the Synod of 1890, only three took part during its five days sittings. Surely that is conclusive evidence that for want of opportunity to gain information, the laity are silent, and when required to vote, are almost necessarily compelled to vote as the clergy tacitly desire them to vote. The laity of the London House study all questions, and by debate impart and gain useful information, and they have been of great service to the Church. But for their suggestions and advice the important Clergy Discipline Bill would never have become law.

18. "I have read with care your pamphlet, etc,, I would say, it has been a long felt want, as the laity should have some knowledge of the motions to come before the Synod before the meeting thereof. I would say that there are many points in church work that the laity in cities know nothing about. Since I have been here I have come in contact with church matters which should be discussed by right-thinking men, wishing you every success in the work, etc."

19. "In reply, etc., I may say, as far as I can at present judge, such an organization would surely be a benefit, and I would be in favor of it, and without doubt it would meet with approval of laymen in this vicinity."

20. "I received your circular, etc., and have been thoughtfully considering it. I fully coincide with all that the pamphlet contains. It will be a great advance in bringing the lay element of the Church in closer communion with the powers that be. What struck me very forcibly the first time I attended Synod, a decade ago, was that lay delegates, especially those from rural parishes had but a small share in the proceedings of the House. The discussions were all confined to the clergy and a few city laymen, who, being by their professions used to addressing public audiences readily took part in debate with the clergy. Many delegates from rural districts do not like to rise before a large body of talented men to give expression to their views, but meeting together as laymen, they would have more self-possession and confidence than in attempting to address the whole Synod. That I am not alone of that opinion I know, because some of my friends have declined to act as delegates as they could not speak if they went to the Synod."

"I believe the proposed scheme will be the means of infusing new life into the laity. It will bring them into closer relation with His Lordship, and the rulers of the Church. I have given much earnest thought to the paragraphs 15 and 16, and fully concur in what is therein set forth. I believe it will be the means to teach our people to have more energy and enterprise in the cause of the Church."

21. "I have carefully read your circular letter and proposal, and in my opinion feel that as an auxiliary, the House of Laymen will do much good. Sec. 11 of the Proposal is particularly true, and if only the House of Laymen could remedy that, it would have served a good purpose."

22. "Your circular and pamphlet duly received. In reply: The composition of Convocation, and our Synod being so unlike, makes me conclude, that what may be advantageous there might be quite the contrary here. I have also several objections to the argument in favor of and the plan for carrying out the 'Proposal.' The speaking power of the laity is but little, if any, inferior to that of the clergy. We have many clever business men whose besetting fault is speaking too often, and on every matter brought up. Again the small majority of the clergy vote vanishes when the voting is not by orders, as is generally the case."

"As regards the plan as proposed, the Tuesday evening at present is taken up with the opening service, and Wednesday night is devoted to the missionary meeting, therefore there is no available time, but on the Monday, and as there were objections raised to the 'opening service' being held at that time, the same objections would hold good to a meeting of the 'House of Laymen.'"

"I think everything might be discussed with advantage in Synod if we had more time, and *certainly evening sessions for the Synod should be the rule* and not the exception, so that we might have more time for real church work, other than routine business."

The first paragraph is a mere assumption of a fact for the existence of which there is not a shadow of likelihood. Then we have a list of objections, which the writer answers (to himself) most satisfactorily in the last paragraph. Re-organize the whole Synod—extend its sittings—abolish the "opening service" and the "missionary meeting," and then everything might be discussed with advantage in Synod.

Our object is not to pull down but to build up If only the Laity were required to meet, and we are satisfied they would willingly do so, on the Monday from two to five and from eight to eleven, the objects of the House of Laymen would be fully answered, and without in the least interfering with the present composition and arrangements of the Synod.

23. "Replying to your favor, etc., I am quite in favor of the establishment of House of Laymen, although I have had no opportunity of discussing this proposal with my colleagues or other laity. I would venture the opinion, that it would meet with the approval of the laity as a whole."

24. "I have considered the matter you ask my opinion about. I think it is a step in the right direction. The delegates from country parishes could bring up matters connected with the Church, and debate among themselves, better than they can if they are sitting with the clergy. Many are afraid to speak before men so highly educated, and yet our objects and meaning may be as good."

25. "I beg to say that I am favorable to the establishment of a House of Laymen for the Diocese of Toronto, and believe that it would meet with the approval of a majority of the country laity."

26. "If our constitution was changed, and instead of the present election of delegates, a House of Laymen should be formed to confer, etc., the Bishop could have no difficulty in giving his support to the movement."